

Why does your organization need to hire an emotionally intelligent leader?

Individuals are usually hired based on their technical competencies in a relevant field.

This is a great strategy when recruiting employees, but when it comes to hiring a leader for those employees, the technical capability is a less important factor in the equation of success for the organization. Although the common practice has been to hire a leader who is more technically competent, research and history have shown that an emotionally intelligent leader plays a more prominent role in a company's success than a technically capable leader; someone with a high level of EI can effectively bring the best out of their team by promoting active engagement among employees, harmony in the workplace and improve output per worker.

Technical knowledge related to the job is still important for the role of a leader. It is not practical to hire a leader who has no previous knowledge of working with software to come and lead a team of software engineers despite their high levels of Emotional Intelligence. This is because such an individual will not be able to relate to what the employers go through everyday building software. Hence, such an EI leader will not be able to successfully motivate their employees to be more productive in their work. On the other hand, it is also not in the company's best interest to hire an individual with solely the knowledge of computer science and zero emotional intelligence to lead a team of software engineers. In this case, the leader will not be able to manage the team. Such a leader will come up with great ideas for production but will not give the team enough breaks or take their personal lives into consideration when allocating tasks. Admittedly, no one is great at everything they do, but an emotionally intelligent individual is great at identifying his or her own greatness and shortcomings as well as of others. It is crucial to find a balance in what we do and in terms of organizations, it is important to find the best atmosphere so that employees can work at their best level physically and mentally and boost the organization as a whole in

the short and long run. Thus, even though technical skills are an important skill to look for when hiring a leader, Emotional Intelligence is more important.

During the early 1920s, Professor Thorndike defined Emotional Intelligence as the “ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls, to act wisely in human relations.” (Srivastava K. ,2013, p.1). Emotional Intelligence simply means an individual possesses the ability to understand and control their own emotions in a positive manner while relieving stress, communicating effectively with others, empathizing with others, overcoming challenges, and diffusing difficult situations. In even simpler terms, an Emotionally Intelligent individual is Socially Aware.

An authentic leader is emotionally intelligent. Everyone can work, but not everyone can lead a group of workers. It takes some special qualities — such as understanding employee’s emotions, managing self and others’ emotions, a good listener and speaker, and more — in an individual to become a leader who is respected and accepted by those working under him/her. A study was conducted by Rodriguez in 2016 to better understand whether Emotional Intelligence and authentic leadership measured are predictors of one another (Rodriguez, 2016, p.49). To measure Emotional Intelligence SSEIT, *Schuetz Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test*, was used and to measure Authentic leadership ALQ, *Authentic Leadership Questionnaire*, was filled out by the participants of the study. Furthermore, To analyse authentic leadership, Rodriguez considered perception of emotions, use of emotions, management of self-emotions, management of other’s emotions, age, gender and tenure. Additionally, EI was subcategorised into, perceptions of emotions, use of emotions, management of self-emotions and management of others’ emotions. Overall, the findings were that Authentic Leadership significantly predicts almost all measures of Emotional intelligence; an individual who possesses a higher level of Emotional Intelligence has a higher probability of becoming a leader who is valued by his/her subordinates. If such a

leader is appointed in an organization, other members and employees will be motivated to improve their levels of work to impress the boss, which in return raises the net output of the organization.

Consequently, there exists a positive correlation between a leader's Emotional Intelligence and their employee's active engagement in the workplace. A technically capable leader has the tendency of pushing their subordinates to work to their maximum potential; in this context, the term 'maximum' is used in terms of hours put into work. However, what goes unnoticed in the eyes of such leaders is the fact that their employees have a lot going on in their life out of the workplace that impacts their quality of work output. In such a situation, an emotionally intelligent leader better manages the employees because they take their situation and mental health into consideration in addition to physical health; they do so in the form of counseling or letting the employee speak his/her mind just to clear the brain. This promotes the importance of mental health which is easily recognized by an Emotionally Intelligent Leader. Having better mental health means the person is happier when he/she comes to work. If this is the case, the individual spreads his positivity amongst his co-workers. Overall, an EI leader makes a small change while deciding in the short run; such as allocating less work to an individual going through hard times with the family, maybe the death of a family member. This decision has immense positive outcomes as that individual will come back to work once the tide has passed with positive energy and gratitude towards the leader. Hence, allowing them to outperform their past selves with improved dedication. This has been supported in a study conducted to find the relationship between a manager's emotional intelligence and employee engagement using a quantitative approach (Adams, 2013, p.20). Adams also stated that there exists a strong positive correlation between a leader's emotional intelligence and workgroup engagement which in fact reinstates my claim.

Clearly, then an emotionally intelligent Leader promotes harmony in the workplace which has other positive butterfly effects such as improved productivity and better customer satisfaction. An Emotionally intelligent leader can take better advantage of the division of labor to maximize employee's potential. Using an employee's strengths and weaknesses to the company's overall advantage is a common practice demonstrated by the EI leaders. Such practices lead to other effects that are good for the organization. For example, in a service-oriented organization, interactions between employees and customers are very common. If employees are happy at work, they inevitably behave better with the customers; they prove to be better citizens of the company. As a result, there is an increase in sales and better customer satisfaction. Overall, if an organization's objective is to increase sales, it should start by improving the emotional intelligence of its sales force, including management as they are leading the sales team. Higher rates of emotional intelligence correlate to improved sales and improve psychological health and safety in the workplace (Baynton, April 17, 2017).

In addition, Emotionally Intelligent leaders have better control over their feelings and can pass this onto their subordinates to promote harmony in the workplace. It is very normal for an employee to come to work in a bad mood. In such moments, a less emotionally intelligent employee does not have control over their feelings and may behave unexpectedly in the workplace creating an atmosphere of tension. An EI leader can motivate people in these circumstances to control their inner demons at work and save the company from negativity. Another common thing faced by workers of an organization is change. Change occurs within organizations when companies are merged, acquired, closed, expanded, downsized or restructured. This may often lead to employee dissatisfaction. An Emotionally Intelligent leader can motivate the group during these times to acclimatize themselves to the change and keep on working at their highest potential while been happy (Mckenzie, 2010, p.2).

Overall, the presence of an emotionally Intelligent leader leading a team has more positive effects – a better understanding of employees mental and physical state in and out of the workplace, stronger bonding between employees in the organization, a better chain of command, increased harmony, more control over organization's members' feelings, increased productivity, and more – for an organization than negative effects. Even though technical proficiency is necessary when hiring people in an organization, the leader should be hired or selected mainly based on their Emotional Intelligence as doing so will result in an organization enjoying more short- and long-term benefits.

References

- Adams, T. L. (2013). *Leader emotional intelligence and workgroup engagement: A quantitative correlational study* (Order No. 3572896). Available from ABI/INFORM Collection. (1438049250).
<https://ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/docview/1438049250?accountid=465>
- Baynton, M. A. (2017, April 17). Positive mental health good business strategy. *Canadian HR Reporter*, 30(7), 26-26,29.
<https://ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/docview/1897684025?accountid=465>
- De Geofroy, Z., & Evans, M. M. (2017). Are emotionally intelligent employees less likely to hide their knowledge? *Knowledge and process management*, 24(2), 81-95.
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/10.1002/kpm.1532>
- Krishnakumar, S., Hopkins, K., & Robinson, M. D. (2017). When feeling poorly at work does not mean acting poorly at work: The moderating role of work-related emotional intelligence. *Motivation and Emotion*, 41(1), 122-134.
<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/10.1007/s11031-016-9588-0>
- McKenzie, K. L. (2010). *Leading an organization through change using emotional intelligence* (Order No. 3424861). Available from ABI/INFORM Collection. (763492259). <https://ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/docview/763492259?accountid=465>
- Rodriguez, J. (2016). *Emotional intelligence and authentic leadership: An empirical exploration of two emerging theoretical constructs* (Order No. 10304266). Available from Business Premium Collection; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1860703377).

<https://ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/docview/1860703377?accountid=465>

Srivastava K. (2013). Emotional intelligence and organizational effectiveness. *Industrial psychiatry journal*, 22(2), 97–99. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0972-6748.132912>